

PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVED MINUTES OF 07/26/04

2003-0938 – Joe Wagner [Applicant] Sunnyvale School District [Owner]: Application for a Use Permit on a 7.8-acre site to allow for expansion of the existing Stratford School (grades K-8) from 258 students up to a maximum of 440 students. The property is located at **819 West Iowa Avenue** in a P-F (Public Facility) Zoning District. (APN: 165-11-007) (Mitigated Negative Declaration) SL

Steve Lynch, presented the staff report. He summarized the proposed expansion of the school highlighting the use, site layout out, landscaping, parking and circulation. He noted that when the application was approved in 2003, a traffic impact analysis was required but was not complete to allow the maximum number of students of 440 students and 27 full time staff. He noted that the Traffic Impact Study has been completed since then and the applicant requests this expansion. He noted the result of the traffic impact analysis focusing on the level of service at intersection adjacent to the site, the traffic impacts to the surrounding neighborhood and the loading and unloading impacts to the immediate adjacent neighbors. He further noted that the analysis concluded that there would be no new level of service at the key intersection and although there would be an increase traffic volume it would not be noticeable. However, there would be loading and unloading impacts. Therefore staff is recommending a Traffic Demand Management Program (TDM) where the applicant would phase the loading and unloading at the site such as staging of classes and a traffic design to prevent spillover on the public street. Staff was able to make the required Findings and recommended approval of the Use Permit subject to the Conditions of Approval.

Comm. Babcock asked staff how many students were there when the school was Adair Elementary School. Staff responded that he does not have the numbers available.

Comm. Babcock further asked staff if there is any comparison made to the Challenger School about queuing station and circulation pattern. She expressed concerns about these impacts on Hollenbeck that it may happen in this neighborhood. Staff responded by explaining the loading and unloading zone pattern is on McKinley and not on Pastoria. He added that one of the reasons for the Transportation Demand Management is to address this impact through staggered arrival and departure.

Furthermore, Comm. Babcock expressed concerns that the TDM may exacerbate the problem with the staggered arrival such as families having two children who may have different arrival and departure. Staff responded that the TDM is designed to avoid the arrival of parents at the same time and staggered scheduling would mitigate this impact.

Finally, Comm. Babcock asked if it is possible to add a condition of approval that queuing station on Pastoria shall be prohibited and only allowed to use the main parking lots. Staff responded that it is possible.

Comm. Simons asked staff if Moffett Park Transportation Business Association (MPTBA) supports this project relative to the Transportation Demand Management Program. Gerri Caruso, Principal Planner, responded that as far as she knows, MPTBA was formed for industrial businesses at Moffett Park and has extended part of an industrial site on Arques but not beyond those areas.

Comm. Simons further asked staff if this is the first school to have a TDM requirement. Staff responded that the City has worked with the school districts about implementation of TDM programs to public schools.

Comm. Klein asked staff whether parking for administrative staff was accounted for in the site parking analysis. Staff responded yes.

Chair Moylan shared his ex-parte communication with the school district superintendent about the possibility of the school re-opening the subject site into a public school. He read the e-mail that the superintendent supports the increase of student capacity as it would assist in the overcrowding of the school. He stated the reasons for not opening the school: 1) the school is too small; 2) the site is at the wrong area of town for increased student population; 3) the leasing of the property offers revenue to the school's general fund, and 4) the school is quite small and would be costly to maintain. He stated that the superintendent complimented the applicant for an outstanding job in controlling traffic because of their engineering and monitoring technique, the school district witnessed next to zero traffic problems.

Chair Moylan opened the public hearing.

Joe Wagner, applicant, stated that Stratford School has been in the city for the past four years. He stated that historically the number of students allowed at the site is greater than 440. He referenced to Hollenbeck School that one difference is that Stratford School arrival is at two locations separating elementary and secondary schools. He stated that it is their best interest to be a good neighbor and that they have listened and conducted meetings with their neighbors. The school has listened to the neighborhood's concerns and will continue to address concerns. He urged the Commission to approve the application.

Kevin Werner, member of the public, expressed concerns about the traffic impact and flow on McKinley and the peak number of vehicles. He also noted the traffic safety issues of the proposed expansion. He agreed with Superintendent Rudnicki about the benefit of the school augmenting the overcrowding of public

school. However, he felt that the site is not ideal to add the secondary school as there is no space for a playing field.

Wendy Tan, member of the public, commented that it is not a good use of the facility. She expressed concerns about the increased traffic and safety in the neighborhood. She noted that neighbors who live on McKinley were not invited to attend the neighborhood meeting conducted by Stratford School on July 28 and expressed concerns that there has been no goodwill efforts exercised by the applicant.

Sopheak Sim, member of the public, stated that she is a diligent observer. She concurred that there is traffic and safety concerns but there is room for improvements and that could be identified by the applicant. She expressed concerns with the increased enrollment. She suggested adding a crosswalk on Pastoria or possibly a stop sign. She commented that staff informed her that a stop sign is not feasible as the crosswalk would be a mid block crossing.

Comm. Fussell asked Ms. Sim where the crosswalks currently exists. Ms. Sim responded that there is a crosswalk because it on McKinley and would also like to have a crosswalk on Pastoria.

Donna Fiarella, member of the public, asked whether the playground is extending beyond the school district administration building. Staff responded that there is no encroachment to the school administration building as it is part of the lease space. He further clarified that there is no proposed expansion to the site. Ms. Fiarella expressed concerns about the proposed expansion as it would increase traffic affecting the neighborhood. She opposed the enrollment expansion.

Alex Mou, member of the public, stated that the current use is acceptable but the proposed expansion would mean increased traffic and the lack of parking availability. He opposed the expansion.

Joe Wagner, applicant, stated that they strive to be good neighbor and encouraged the neighborhood to communicate their concerns. He apologized if the some of the neighbors did not receive an invitation and noted that they went beyond the radius of noticing. He realized that the school would create traffic but the school provides a good benefit to the community. He noted that they provide incentive by issuing a savings bond when carpooling and have good leverage in ensuring that parents observe school procedures to continue providing this service to the community. He agreed that there is room for improvement and is willing to listen to suggestions in addressing the neighbors' concerns. He thanked the Commission and looking forward to working in the City for many years.

Comm. Simons asked Mr. Wagner if he is familiar with the TDM program in mitigating traffic. Mr. Wagner is familiar with a traffic management that may be a similar program but with different name. He stated that one of the techniques to mitigate traffic is staggered arrival and schedule with car pooling.

Comm. Simons further asked if he is familiar with the safe school program in public schools. Mr. Wagner responded that they have not observed the safe school program but explained that they have such as providing a parent handbook, security guard monitoring traffic on their parking lot and have staff members coordinating arrival and departure of students and parents.

Further Comm. Simons asked Mr. Wagner if concerns have been communicated to him such as parents stopping and talking in the street middle of the street and parents' behavior creating safety concerns. Mr. Wagner responded that last summer the school started off well on traffic management but some of the parents change behavior and became less attentive to pedestrians. He acknowledged that it is incumbent upon them to enforce traffic management. He stated that these actions would be addressed as it is in their best interest to be good neighbor.

Comm. Simons suggested providing contact phone numbers and e-mail address to the neighbors so they may communicate their concerns. Mr. Wagner provided the following information: His phone number is 408-732-2735, Stratford School number is 737-1500. His e-mail address is jwagner@stratfordschools.com and the school is sw@stratford.com.

Comm. Fussell asked Mr. Wagner for the percentage of parents driving to school. Mr. Wagner responded that Stratford School including De Anza is 95%. He added that even with parents living nearby, parents drive and drop off their children on the way to work.

Chair Moylan closed the public hearing.

Comm. Simons asked staff if there is any usefulness of MPTBA to expand further south of the City. Mr. Witthaus responded it is formed for Moffett Park businesses and that the schools have different traffic demand. He added that MPTBA could be used as a resource for non-industrial businesses.

Comm. Simons further asked Mr. Witthaus whether the TDM program would have a review period as the condition of approval appears to have a lack of enforcement or compliance measure. Mr. Witthaus responded that staff will have threshold to address the loading and handling of traffic and a monitoring mechanism provide staff the ability to review the TDM activities and to submit a public remedy.

Further, Comm. Simons asked whether it would be useful to add some controls such as crosswalks or a stop sign around the subject site. Mr. Witthaus responded that a detailed traffic study was conducted and the study did not find that this is a necessity. However, staff will continue to listen to the residents. He noted that a petition was received to do a neighborhood traffic study which is independent of the school application.

Comm. Klein commented that he is pleased that a traffic study would be conducted in this neighborhood and recommended looking into installation of traffic lights. He added that with the redevelopment of the downtown there would be anticipated increased traffic in the neighborhood a study is more critical.

Comm. Babcock asked clarification of staff about Conditions of Approval #12A requiring 80 students per 15 minute period in the Pastoria Avenue parking lot or the use of the turn-out on Pastoria. Staff responded that the parking lot is referring to the parking lot between the school district and Stratford School which is part of the lease site area.

Further, Comm. Babcock commented that the loading and unloading area does not connect to the parking lot. Mr. Witthaus clarified that it is the south end of the site with access from Pastoria and not the turn-out on Pastoria. He added that there is no loading and unloading that takes place on this turn-out but rather at the parking lot.

Furthermore, Comm. Babcock asked whether there is parking along Pastoria on the turn-out. Mr. Witthaus responded that the study indicated that there is no significant queuing on public streets and that staff is not allowing parking on the street for loading and unloading.

Comm. Babcock further asked Mr. Witthaus' opinion about excluding the turn-out from usage. Mr. Witthaus responded that the turn-out is not being considered as loading and unloading area as the size is not suitable. He added that using the turn-out as parking would have to be reviewed further.

Comm. Babcock made a motion on Item #2003-0938 to adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and approve the Use Permit subject to Conditions of Approval with modification prohibiting the use of the turn-out on Pastoria Avenue for loading and unloading use. Comm. Sulser seconded.

Comm. Babcock commented that it is a difficult project to consider. She concurred with staff that the expansion would create traffic demand for loading and unloading. She urged that the queuing of the cars should be off of the city streets and should take place in the two parking lots on the project site. She encouraged the applicant to consider incentives for car sharing and identify other alternatives to improve the queuing.

Comm. Fussell asked Comm. Babcock whether the motion is intended to eliminate any potential use of the turn-out on Pastoria Avenue. Comm. Babcock said yes.

Comm. Simons expressed concerns that the additional condition would cause more congestion. He added that when the TDM is reviewed, there is an opportunity to change the queuing. He supports the opportunity for staff to review the traffic flow and later could impose potential mitigation in the future.

Comm. Fussell was hesitant as he likes the overall project. He did not support the motion with the added condition. He felt that the use of the turn-out should be included in the study and further explored.

Chair Moylan commented that the public expressed about the parents' behavior. He was pleased that a transportation demand management program is being applied to a school is a great idea and would prefer to apply the TDM to public schools as well. He further commented that a larger student population with a TDM enforced by the City, the traffic would be less. He supported the motion.

Comm. Babcock clarified her added condition and reasons for this modification. She stated that the turn-out with egress and ingress from Pastoria the exit is less than one car length into the south end parking lot for loading and unloading of student, therefore not ideal for continue use.

FINAL MOTION:

Comm. Babcock made a motion on Item #2003-0938 to adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and approve the Use Permit subject to Conditions of Approval with modification prohibiting the use of the turn-out on Pastoria Avenue for loading and unloading use. Comm. Sulser seconded.

Motion carried 4-2 with Comm. Fussell and Simons dissenting and Vice Chair Hungerford absent.

Ms. Caruso stated that the item is final unless appealed to the City Council within the 15-day appeal period.